

SPECTRUM OF CIRCLES

**DEATH METAL / HARDCORE / NOISE FANZINE
10 / 2024**

**NECROTIC OOZE
OMNIVORTEX
NO EXCEPTIONS
SAVAGE GOSPEL**

Inevitable collapse in the presence of conviction

Spectrum of Circles # 1, December 2023: Aedes, Itsesaastutus, Kova Totuus, Morbific.

Spectrum of Circles # 2, December 2023: Gorekaust, Lähdön Aika, Hekatoxen, Sonic Poison

Spectrum of Circles # 3, February 2024: Soul Incursion, True Grit, Disguised Malignance, Castrated Youth

Spectrum of Circles # 4, March 2024: Hoc est Bellum, Below the Graves, Grave with a View, Skepticism

Spectrum of Circles # 5, March 2024: Azatoth, Sulfuric Cautery, Thin Line, Sacred Crucifix

Spectrum of Circles # 6, April 2024: Health Issues, Sequestrum, Cerebrum, Baron + Bloodlands, Fury of Livez

Spectrum of Circles # 7, April 2024: Taser, Gutrefaxion, Kuvotus, Ilon Lapset

Spectrum of Circles # 8, May 2024: Whisper, Haudat, Cryptic Hatred, Gray State

Spectrum of Circles # 9, July 2024: Praise, Guts, Kaivs, Sentenced

Ajatuksen Valo # 19, December 2023: Sonic Poison, Exit Condition, Loppusijoitus. In Finnish only!

Ajatuksen Valo # 20, April 2024: Juska Kuhanen, Antti Kivimäki, Antti Klemi

(Ajatuksen Valo # 19 and # 20 the only Ajatuksen Valo that's been issued as a PDF, all the previous issues were printed. I do have some older issues, but I need to check availability. Costs might be high, but the zine prices are low. Use Tawastian Tower Productions email for inquiries.

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Necrotic Ooze: The oozers themselves

Omnivortex: Arto Alho (small pictures), Antti Kontoniemi (large pictures)

No Exceptions: Jouni Parkku (that's right)

Savage Gospel: Jouni Parkku (promotional "art"), Sami Harju (photos)

Playlist

Alghazanth – Subliminal Antenora
Askel – Cycles of Ruin
Circle – Panic
Corrupted – Felific Algorithm / Mushikeras
Dark Tranquillity – Skydancer,
The Gallery & Projector
Deathraid – The Year the Earth Struck Back
Disfear – Everyday Slaughter
Extinction of Mankind – The Nightmare Seconds & Northern Scum
Goatsnake – I
Heresy – Face Up to It
Jute – Nothing Beats Reality
Kasshuve – Dummedagen kommer
Meanwhile – Reality or Nothing
Mogao – Tri-Kaya
The Quiet Room – Introspect
Schizo – Main Frame Collapse
Sunn O))) – Metta, Benevolence
BBC 6 Live: On the Invitation of Mary Anne Hobbs
Wolfbrigade – Prey to the World & Comalive

Editorial

History repeats itself. Computers getting broken, fonts getting fucked up, a new version of Scribus coming up with new shenanigans, ultimate suffering in the name of flu in the final days of making this issue... I've been here before.

Welcome to the tenth issue of Spectrum of Circles. Yes, number 10. Double digits. How do I feel? Of course ten issue of the zine is a milestone, but considering these issues are relatively short and PDF distribution certainly relieves some pressure, it certainly doesn't feel like Spectrum of Circles has reached something notable.

But when I look at the printed pages of published backcatalogue, the total amount of pages is mindblowing. Almost 200 pages in total. All this in less than a year. Impressive, right? Yeah, you can see the differences between the issues 1 and 10, but the main idea behind the zine is still intact; to do a fanzine about music that moves my soul with minimal stress. That hasn't changed a bit, but my relation to Spectrum of Circles has certainly... refined, during these past months. You can add "but without minimal effort"; you might have noticed how the interview questions in general have gotten some depth or new ways to present them, even though those always depend on the subject of the interview. I still get some interviews finished which were agreed upon during last year that just cover the bare basics, and then there's some interviews that have evolved from a single idea into a full in-depth interview within a mere week. The variety is always there, in more ways than you could first think of. I can live with that. Hey, I said there's no excess stress involved! There's enough of that in my daily life already, so I don't need to get too much of it from my past-times. That being said, the stress is still there. Always been, but at least I've spent even some weeks even without thinking of Spectrum of Circles.

Some of you might be shocked to see that there is absolutely NOTHING on the cover, apart from compulsory shit. Just like Savage Gospel stated in their interview, it would be preferable if their cover arts had at least some idea behind them. The truth is, I struggled with having good ideas for the cover even before Savage Gospel sent their answers, and since I usually have at least something that connects to some (if not all) the artists featured in the issue at hand, this was a whole new situation. Having this issue as a "WHOA LOOK AT THIS DOUBLE DIGIT ISSUE WHOA LET'S CELEBRATE" "special" (well, there's NOTHING special here) certainly didn't help, either. I have some decent photographs I'm going to use as zine covers in the future, but none of them was fitting to this issue... so the best solution was to leave it blank. There you go. On the other hand, a thought of having issue larger than normal also crossed my mind, but eventually I didn't want to make any fuss about double digits, so here we go; another standard-sized issue of Spectrum of Circles.

During the summer months I've met more people than usual and I have gotten some feedback in the process. Of course, a majority of that feedback is positive as it usually is on face-to-face situations and some of it even came from unexpected sources (I still tend to think no one is even aware of Spectrum of Circles' existence). Most of the critique was aimed at PDF format... or not actually the PDF format as such, but the hardships of reading long pieces of text from a phone screen. And I can agree with that wholeheartedly, that's not my preference either, but this is

the reality we live in with limited time, printing costs, postage, publishing pace and all that. That's why I print my copy as soon as I have an opportunity for that, and I strongly encourage everyone to do that. The layout of the zine is designed with that particular goal in mind. That said, no plans to alter the original plan are in sight... but in case if someone is interested in printing Spectrum of Circles issues with distribution in mind, I'm all ears.



Spectrum of Circles is, even if it's written in first-person view, all about the bands. I haven't felt important to shed too much light on my personal life, and frankly, there's not much to tell. Really, my life is pretty boring; safe and relatively stable, and that's what I do appreciate. I'm not much of a photogenic person either; I know how to handle a camera, but it's usually me behind it. So there you go, the first photo of me since the second issue! Then there's a new entry for the Tawastian Archives series, which also surface last time in the second issue. It's actually the third one written, but the second one published. Where did that one go? I just haven't had the right opportunity to publish it, that's all. You really thought it was a one-off thing, didn't you? Sorry to disappoint you.

Since there's an interview with No Exceptions in this issue, I could throw a disclaimer here: I have said it earlier (actually in the very first Spectrum of Circles editorial, which was written before anything else), but me, the editor of this magazine, is a straight edge. For life? Can't say, but currently it's something that works for me and it's a goal in life. There's no just need to blur my vision, throw away my money and precious hours or dive into the false sense of love or brotherhood.

However, I don't ask permission or seek validation from others for that, so that's why you haven't seen me sporting X's on the palms often (I have no problem sporting them, though), listening only to straight edge hardcore, spilling other people's beer or anything else you could think a stereotypical straight edge "kid" would do. For those people who wonder why I haven't kept much noise about it is the personal choice behind that and also drawing too strict lines doesn't work in Finland. There's not enough straight edge people in the whole country to form a consistent scene and just hang out with the like-minded individuals, most of which will drop out of straight edge or hardcore scene anyway.

Right. Necrotic Ooze, Omnivortex and Savage Gospel are here too, and for obvious reasons; they've made an impression to me, all for different reasons. And that's how Spectrum of Circles rolls.

August 2024
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Ps. If you can read Finnish, I dare you to check out new Orjakansa zine! Try to google it, it's a free-to-download PDF just like Spectrum of Circles is!



Can you comprehend anything out of that logo? No? Good. It's the slime that defines everything, also the very existence of this Pori-based death metal band? Do you remember Stench of Decay? Right, because there's connections to that band.

Given the age of the band, the fact that everything they have recorded is crammed into a 15-minute cassette (published by the mighty Iron Corpse!), the nature of the band and their absence from the public light, there wasn't too much to ask. So, here we go with the basics.

One third of the true, Rami, who handles the strings, provided us with some answer. July 2024.

Greetings! How are you?

Good evening! Fine, thank you. It's a warm Friday evening and I'm watching EURO 2024 quarter-finals whilst answering these questions, haha.

So, for starters, I think we need an origin story. How did it all come together and Necrotic Ooze was given birth?

Around Christmas 2022 I plugged in some very heavy-gauge guitar strings into my guitar, set very low tuning and took the guitar and amp with me to Pori for some Twixmas doodling. I knew my friend Sami (from Ascended) had his drums at a rehearsal place so I asked him if we should try out these few heavy mid-tempo death metal riffs I've been writing. I hadn't been playing with anyone for a few years and neither had Sami, but it turned out to be fun, and in January 2023 I realized that we need some bass and vocals for this as well. Luckily a long-time friend of ours Tommi (from Ascended & Stench of Decay) was available and up for it, and the line-up was complete. It was also in January when Sami told us that he had been accepted as a student at a school in Inari, Lapland (over 1000km away) for a year and that the school starts in the end of March. We made some quick calculations and thought that we could try to get three songs ready and rehearsed by that. We managed to do that and recorded the drums in Pori a couple of days before Sami left for Lapland and the rest of instruments and vocals were recorded after that in Helsinki.

I'm not sure if you have even made it public who are the members of the band, or at least it hasn't been made an issue. Is it even important to know who makes the music we consume?

I think it's not always important to know who makes the music, although sometimes it's a bit "cheap" way to create mystical aura around the band. In our case, we just wanted to keep things low profile as we just recorded a demo and we are not even sure if we are to release anything more in the future. We also don't work like some other bands too, as we have not had rehearsals after March 2023 and we are not sure if we want to play gigs, hehe. So, the idea was just to make a demo and nothing more, and we didn't think these things quite through, haha.

All of you have been involved with Pori death metal acts Stench of Decay, Ascended and Chainsaw Dismemberment. Do you see Necrotic Ooze as a continuation or extension to those bands or their legacy? I bet there are certain elements that have carried onto Necrotic Ooze... I could even argue that someone could mistake Necrotic Ooze for Stench of Decay. "Ei omena kauas puusta putoa"? Honestly, if someone would have played your demo to me and claimed it was new stuff from Stench of Decay, I would have believed that person.

From my own point of view, I at least tried to create something a bit different than I had done with Stench of Decay, but I'm not sure how I succeeded in this, hehe. I see Stench of Decay more deeply rooted in the Finnish death metal legacy with Bolt Thrower -esque bulldozing parts. With Necrotic Ooze, I tried to simplify things and to create more heavier riffs than before, but we have our own way of making music which we can't escape it seems...

Was it intentional to pursue a sound or direction you have, or is it something that just came out naturally?

I had a vision quite clear in my mind. I have always enjoyed these low-tuned bands that have heavy and sinister riffs, like Rippikoulu, Agonized, Eternal Darkness and Moondark from Finland and Sweden, but also Cianide, Mythic, Derketa, Infester and Imprecation from the US. With these bands in mind, I tried to create some riffs that recreate the same kind of atmosphere with simplicity and heaviness.

My father who's not into metal or even most of the rock music – let alone Finnish death metal – described Necrotic Ooze as "noise from the Jurassic period". I think his assessment was genuine and frankly not even that far-fetched, given the fact that such definitions for death metal even exist. What do you think? Want to send your warmest regards?

Haha, dad's say the darndest things! I think that's a quite good description of this sort of music with the rolling speed of amphibian, drums that split the continent and lyrics that forecast the extinction of all living species.

In your eyes, what makes Finnish death metal stand out, as opposed to the sounds of Florida or Stockholm, for an example?

I think that the fact that Finland remained so long a bit under-rated without any leading death metal bands at the time led the bands to create their own sound rather than just copying the sound of the country's pioneering bands. I haven't researched it scientifically or anything, but it also seems that even smallest towns in Finland had at least a few extreme metal (thrash/death/black) bands, whereas in other countries the scene was built around big cities. I don't know if this fact has anything to do with how the Finnish death metal got shaped, but I like to think that this "rurality" in Finnish death metal produced more versatile, more diverse and more unique bands. When you form a band in small town, all the members are not necessarily fully cultivated with every death metal nuances, and their understanding of musical aesthetics might be grounded in other genres, such as punk, goth, rock, etc. and that brings the versatility and uniqueness in the band.

How would you define the Finnish sound? The penchant for doomier elements, a certain way to approach riffs and melody... is it just that, or something else? The infamous Finnish mentality, perhaps?

The Finnish sound is definitely doomier as all the classic Finnish bands are almost not at all thrash-inspired. After that defining the sound is trickier. The dark and eerie melodies and heavy riffs can be found in some bands from the US and Swedish bands outside Stockholm. But, on the whole, the Finns have had an ability to create a sort of "black metal"-like atmosphere in death metal, where the sound is almost poetic that takes you to another world or creates a certain evil or dark atmosphere. For example, when listening to Demilich, I don't think the music is technical death metal, but just something twisted and extreme music out of this world that only resembles death metal bands.

The joys of Finnish death metal seem to be recognized today. For an example, it really wasn't "a thing" until some bands started to adopt that sound a "while" ago. Of course, there are loonies who have explored every possible corner of the earth to unearth hidden death metal gems, but today there seems to be a lot more Finnish death metal enthusiasts abroad who even refer to "Finnish sound" when they describe their own music. What do you think?

Even though "the Finnish sound" is hard to define, I think it sets the reader (or listener) to think of certain bands and their sound. If that's accurate, then it's ok. I don't think any band uses the term only as a marketing trick...?

Way back when Stench of Decay and the friends crawled into the light there wasn't much talk about old school death metal – made in the Finnish way – not even in Finland. Bluntly put, it didn't require much, just you and Vorum and the resurrection of some older bands for Finnish death metal to get some recognition. Of course there had been old school death metal bands, but not many of them embraced the so-called Finnish sound... not to forget Slugathor, of course.

Now, there's enough new bands to justify talks about a wave of Finnish death metal. Can you connect Necrotic Ooze to a current wave, considering most of the new bands consists of members that are in their early 20s or even their teens. Do you see yourselves as some kind of "death metallin vanhempi valtiomies" at this stage, even if there are a lot older people involved in the scene too?

All the younger bands in Finland these days master their instruments much better than we did or still do, hehe. I'd like to connect Necrotic Ooze to the whole Finnish death metal paradigm, and not just the current wave. I think most of the newer bands haven't adopted the "Finnish sound" that much, but instead have their sound rooted in the US or are more punk-influenced than before.

How about the band name? Is it related to Magic: The Gathering?

Yeah, although we have never played it, haha! We hadn't really talked about under what moniker we would like the demo to be released before we had recorded it. I just stumbled across it somewhere online, and it sounded cool name that fits the music and everyone thought that as well.

That leads to another question; how nerdy death metal really is? Is it music from nerds to nerds? I mean there's hardly any standard death metal subjects which do not have any nerdy aspects in them, ranging from literature, board games, horror movies to otherworldly entities. Heck, Bolt Thrower itself is a nerd reference. Should death metal accept accept itself for what it really is?

Yes, death metal is mostly quite nerdy, but so are most extreme metal genres. Even the most "badass" gore bands are actually nerdy with their splatter film references, etc. I think these days the death metal community is so diverse with people from various backgrounds, so even openly nerds are able to find the beauty of this music as their mean of communication.

Is Necrotic Ooze a force not to be messed with or some kind of an exhaust pipe too channel and desire towards metal of death? Does it have a larger purpose in life? Does it need to have?

For us, it's merely an exhaust pipe to release stress, to

have fun and to feel meaningful somehow again, haha. If someone else enjoys our music, we are happy. At the moment it doesn't have any bigger purpose and I don't think it needs to have.

How did the demo come together? What kind of a process it was? Was there a certain vision or aim to guide you, or is it just a backlog of death metal riffs you have gathered during the years?

I had written some stuff, which we were jamming at our rehearsal place. In January 2023 Sami told us he's about to move to Lapland for a year, and we used the remaining two months rehearsing and finishing the songs for the demo. We decided to record the drums in March in Pori, and me and Tommi would have more time to record our parts. The drums were recorded at Pori Film Lab studios by local indie music artist and a friend of ours, Pasi Salmi. We barely got the last song rehearsed and ready in the same day when we were to record the drums, hehe. Then me and Tommi recorded our parts in Helsinki by our friend from Krypts, Otso Ukkonen, at his place. Tommi hadn't sung anything at rehearsals yet and didn't have any lyrics by then, so he tried the lyrics for the first time when recording the vocals, but he actually managed to record the bass and vocals in two hours, haha! Otso did the mixing and mastering as well.

Is there something that connects the songs together? Thematically, perhaps?

I asked Tommi about this, as I didn't see what he had written on A4 paper when we recorded, and he replied: "drawing on current events, each of the songs contemplates the possible end of all life on earth."

Do you have anything brewing? You know, after a juicy first demo you eventually want to consume more.

I have some stuff written, but I haven't seen Tommi and Sami since we recorded the demo, heh. We hope to get back to together in Pori during the annual Pori Jazz festival week this month. Then we would see where it goes...

As far as I know, you have not played live shows so far. Do you plan to play them? Do you even want to?

We have been asked to play some shows, but we haven't been able to play yet. It's still hard to tell if we're ever able with all work and family duties, and due to the fact that we live in three different cities, rehearsing for live shows is quite difficult at the moment.

I think that's concludes our interview. Thank you for your answers! If there is anything left to say, now here's an opportunity for that.

Thank you for your interest in us! Have a great summer!



OMNIVORTEX

Technical. Brutal. Progressive. Crisp production. And now choir of the damned (that are some of our readers) vomit in one, two, three...

Yeah yeah. They might carry axes that have five to seven strings and even know how to use them, but there's some genuine charm and goofballsy demeanor in these people who carry the collective torch of Omnivortex. Who says technical and progressive equal to tedious and serious? Do you even know what "omnivortex" is? Neither do I, but that didn't stop me from approaching them for an interview. Their paths have crossed mine on several occasions, and there certainly is something captivating and hypnotizing in them... July 2024.



Hello! First of all, how are you?

Hey hey! I'm doing good, thanks! Eagerly waiting to start my summer holiday in a few weeks and to play a few festival shows this summer!

What did you have in mind when Omnivortex was taking form? The bands that pop into my mind are Atheist, Cynic, the more experimental stage of Pestilence... on the other hand, the present-day Behemoth is something I can hear there as well. Also, somehow the modern-day De Lirium's Order was something that popped up into my mind while I was listening to "Circulate".

I had been looking for players for quite a while around 2015-2018, and I found our drummer Aaro from YouTube. Luckily, he lived quite nearby, and he had a training place. We originally started out jamming in early 2019 with some covers (Revocation, Slugdge, Gojira). We connected really well, and I made a few demos and showcased them pretty early on. After a few demos, we decided to get a full line up going, and Niko (vocals on our first album) joined early on, since he was a friend of Aaro's. The line-up was filled when Mikko joined us on guitars through an ad we put out on Muusikoiden.net. On the first album we had a hired bassist (Pasi Hakuli), since our debut came out prior to finding a permanent bass player. Lucky enough, we got Mikael to take care of the bassist's helm later on. In terms of music, we and I just wanted to make music that we'd like to hear ourselves. Maybe something, that isn't your "standard" death metal or what not. Basically we just wanted (and want) to make music that we'd like to listen to put it short. Also, nice noticing Atheist! It is most definitely one of the most influential bands (to me at least).

You describe the music of Omnivortex as "blackened". How does black metal manifest itself in

Omnivortex, apart from certain musical characteristics?

Describing our music has always been hard, at least for us, but it's something you have to do. We've been called progressive, technical, blackened, you name it, but we'd like to keep the genre pool as wide as possible. In terms of black metal, there's definitely parts which are – and have – black metallish musical characteristics, that being tremolo picked minor chord sections etc. Other than non-musical terms, I think the band has gotten a bit of black metal-esque themes, mostly in terms of just this being extreme music.

I guess we can't have this conversation without a notion about Death... and I don't think if we need to ponder if they were influential to you or not, but we can just talk about the magnitude of that influence. Apart from "Spiritual Healing", which I have always seen as an attempt to make another "Leprosy", they did carve a bunch of unforgettable albums, none of which sounded like any other of their albums. So... what are thoughts about Death? Which one of their albums you deem as most influential to you, both personally and to the sound of Omnivortex?

We absolutely love Death (surprise). Death was the first death metal band which I fell in love with, after the obligatory Megadeth/Slayer etc., classic 80s metal albums route. Chuck has been one of my favorite guitarists ever since I found out about him. I also know for a fact that Gene Hoglan's work with Death has been very influential for our drummer too. That being said, I think us in the band have agreed that "Symbolic" is their "holy grail" so to speak. Aaaaand I think you can hear some "Symbolic" traits on our music too. To me personally, "Symbolic" or "Human" is my favorite album by them, but it's ever changing. The first album I heard was "Leprosy", and after that, down the rabbit hole I went.

I personally think Death hasn't put out a single bad record.

How about other forms of metal? Do you consume everyman's progressive metal or are you approaching the entire subject solely from the extreme metal point of view?

I listen to a broad spectrum of metal. Though progressive metal (what ever that means, and to whom) is not my "go to", so to speak. Sometimes I might listen to disgusting Demilich-styled bands with cookiemonters vocals, and sometimes it's 80s hardrock or metal; Ratt, Ozzy Osbourne and what not. "Progressive" is a hard subject and a term so broad, that it is impossible to explain what it could mean to everyone. To me personally, it means that the music takes forms, or shifts into places you though it isn't going. Kinda like driving to a new place without the help of GPS hahaa.

Apart from obvious metal influences, what other forms of music you deem particulary influential? Usually the people who make this kind of music seem to know how to appreciate the more classical progressive rock as well.

Hmm... anything thats new, and is something you can't hear everyday. One of the most influental bands out side of metal as for the past few years for me has been Virus from Norway. They have these weird sounding chords and riffs and it's just something that you really need to listen to get a grasp on it. They could be defined as "prog rock" maybe? Other good example is Voivod. Though they are classified often as thrash-metal, they're defo not thrash like Megadeath, or more recent bands like Havok. Voivod too have these unique ways to play and showcase their music, something you don't hear every band doing. Not forgetting about Holdsworthian solo playing by Piggy or Chewy.

Progressive music often goes hand in hand with experimental or psychedelic elements. Do you see there's something experimental in Omnivortex, or perhaps even some psychedelic elements in your sound?

Theres definetly elements from experimenting and psychedelism'. In our music, it can be mainly heard from the clean passages. We want the music to have an otherworldly feel, and the best way we can showcase it is through these passages. Or atleast thats what we think. All in all its all about the listener: where do you feel this music is taking you.

Can you extend your musical influences as far as tapping straight into the source that is the so called "classic rock"? What can you learn from it?

I think in terms of the music itself, you might have to pull quite long ropes for Omnivortex to sound like Deep Purple. That being said, we love those classic bands, but the musical influence might not be heard. But those are the bands that have paved the way, and something we must remember. After all, bands like Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin etc., those are the bands that started all this heavy metal stuff, and we are on the same boat after all.

Generally, how important it is to listen to different kinds of music, even out of the sphere of rock music? Do you listen to any experimental stuff?

I think there is no "it is important" or "it isn't important". Though, listening to a wide spectrum of styles in music usually is a good thing, and makes you understand the music and artists better in general. Is it a necessary to listen all kinds of music? No. Is it good for you? In my opinion, yes. You can only go so far listening to ONLY one genre or style: it's hard to see the forest for the trees.

How much do you place emphasis on technique and skill? I mean, is Omnivortex's music like that because of your present skill or do you strive to refine your skill in order to achieve what you want to achieve?

We don't take technique or skill as an absolute, and we don't want to make technical music or "difficult riffs" just for the sake of it , there's no point in that (for us atleast). Consciously aiming for maximum skill and technicality can take away something from the music. All of us in the band have honed our skills, wheter it be musicianship or technicality (meaning learning different skills and techniques and what not), but when making music, it's never about wanting to do "as complex as possible". All of the music comes very naturally. If we come up with a more "technical" part, so be it, but it must serve the song. We do train new skills etc., but not necessarily as a must to achieve what we'd like to achieve with the music.

Do you see Omnivortex's music as complex? And when it comes to complexity, does it contradict with accessibility? While I thought Omnivortex certainly has it's fair share of technicality and complexity, there's still quite a lot to take a grasp of. Certain catchiness, if you will.

Once again yes and no, it all depends on what you're comparing with what. Say us vs. Obscura, one could easily say Obscura is much more complex. If you compare us vs. AC/DC, I think people would likely say our music is more complex.

Though, I feel like we have a very fine line of complexity, once again, everything has to serve the songs. Complexity doesn't need to affect the accessibility, and I think we have that catchiness, which keeps things intresting. There are complex parts, but they are often "released" to a more traditional riffage etc., if you will. I think if the technicality/accessability is served together in right portions (see every Necrophagist song), I think it just adds more spice to the soup.

Death metal has many divisions. There's many takes on death metal and plenty of styles to choose from. Do you prefer certain approach or do you embrace them all?

For the past few years dissonant death metal has made it's way to "headlines", or has been getting more popular in the underground, and that is something I love. I though do like most death metal sub-genres, dissonant death metal and osdm being my favorites currently.

I saw one headline describing Omnivortex's music fitting for "export". I'm pretty sure the person behind that headline was referring to quality of the music, but the term "export" in that context was still a thought-provoking move. Usually that term is associated with Nightwish, Children of Bodom, Amorphis, Sentenced or the other usual suspects that appeal to broader masses than progressive metal usually appeals to, let alone technical death metal. While aiming towards this kind of success and broader audiences is usually not on the agenda for most of the bands, it's still an interesting thought to think of such a parallel universe. What do you think?



Obviously we are flattered if and when those kind of headlines appear. But we are not aiming to "be the next anything", we just play and we'll see where it takes us. Though it not being a conscious thing we think about, we sure do want to hit the big stages and tours. If the writer of a headline like that thinks we're fit for export (whatever that means), I think we're doing something right, or the person thinks that we are doing stuff more professionally than some other band. Don't know.

What can you tell us about the lyrical influences? What are the primary sources for inspiration? Books? Movies? Video games?

There are many things to consider when talking about lyrical influences. For me, I've always loved HP Lovecraft, no matter how cliché it is in metal music and metal lyrics. So some lyrics are all Lovecraft worship, with outer gods etc., the chthulu mythos- themed stuff. Sometimes the lyrics are more personal, and deal with hard issues, and the inspiration comes from life itself, and it being hard. There are some lyrics which are very dark, dealing with depression etc. The contrast though can be really black and white, since even when we play those songs with dark lyrics live, we still have a smile on our face. And after all that is the main purpose of this. To have fun, and have an outlet to all kinds of feelings.

It's hard to believe that lyrics just a small part of your music, or even some compulsory element that you just need to have. You can see you have put effort in writing them. Well, do you?

Yes and no. To me, the lyrics usually just pop up. To some songs, I've written the lyrics in less than 10 minutes. It comes very naturally to me. Though sometimes I might have to push a little, but usually I always get at least something on paper. Then I just go back to the lyrics and work with them later on. It also helps if you just let your imagination roam free. If you just start to think about let's say space (which is also a theme we use), and the absurdness of it, it is likely to flame some spark of inspiration in terms of writing, at least for me.

What kind of feedback you have gotten of your lyrics? Do people pay attention?

Honestly, we haven't really had any feedback about lyrics. If there has been some feedback, it's been good, and focusing on the more Lovecraftian lyrics. But I don't mind not getting feedback about the lyrics. That's also one thing that might be even worthless to someone in this type of music, or in music in general. Some people like to read the lyrics and try to figure what's going on, and some don't mind it.

What Omnivortex – as a concept and as a band name – represent to you? It deliver a certain message about lyrical themes, thus fitting the core of Omnivortex.

Hard question. It pretty much is just a culmination of a lot of things. It's a group where we have an creative outlet to do what we want, though that being kind of a cliché. And to me personally, it gives a sense of "being" you know? About the band name, hmm... I came up with the name in 2019, but without any real thought behind it. The name -like the music- just came to be.

So far you have released two albums, "Diagrams of Consciousness" in 2020 and "Circulate" in 2023. How would you

compare the two? What has changed between the albums? How have you evolved in between... and have you regressed on some sectors?

I think on the latter one, the all-around mood is a lot darker, lyricwise also. There were a lot of factors that made "Circulate" sound the way it does. Not getting too much in to the subject, but for instance, lots of personal issues and negative things were happening around the time of writing. So that for sure affected how the songs were to be. On our debut album, I think there was a lot of everything, and on Circulate (the 2nd album), we've honed the package to be tighter, rather than having stuff burst out. I personally have evolved as a songwriter and as a lyricist too, I think. Also, like I said earlier, the debut album had a hired bassist, vs. On Circulate we had Mikael, and it shows too. We got to play around with the bass parts more, and Mikael's style suits perfectly to what we had envisioned. That being said, we feel that there is still stuff we need to hone, and on each record, we want to "overtake" the latest one. What's the point in making music just for the sake of it you know? With this I mean that we want to feel that every time we put out a song or a record, it is the best presentation of the band at the time. Also, on Circulate we have two lead vocalists, our drummer Aaro, and me. That also has given our band a new dynamic. But all in all, everyone in the band have evolved in playing their instruments, and we've gotten to know each other on a more personal level too since the debut.

You have a website. While everyone had that in 2005, we are not living in 2005 anymore. A very own website is a rarity nowadays. Do you prefer it that way or is it about a certain level of professionalism? Where is your guestbook?

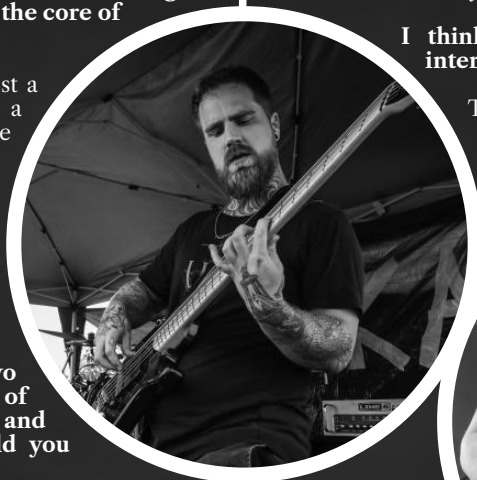
I think it's just to seem professional hahaa. I think we might be living a bit in the past with that, but it is something we want to have. Cause like you said, it use to be a thing, but not so much anymore. But we've grown up during the time that bands had those, thus, we have too. The guestbook though is a must, we need to start working on it hahaa.

One current topic that's been sparked controversy is the use of AI. Within metal, I have encountered just a couple of album covers generated with it, but I got the impression that some metal has been made using it. What do you think of the issue? The subject itself would inspire some lyrics, at least...

I think there is no part for AI in music, in art, or any stuff that is something, that cannot be replicated, which is manmade. Messing around with AI can be fun, sure, but I'll avoid it as long as possible. I can also say that Omnivortex will never use AI with cover art, with creating riffs etc. Absolutely against it.

I think that was it. Thanks for the interview!

Thanks, it was nice chatting!



What about these guys? No mosh, no fun, no core? Well, they are certainly here to mosh and wave the flag of hardcore, but I wouldn't count on that fun part. Let's go primal!



Hello, and thanks for the interview! How are you holding up?

Joonas: Thank you for the questions! I'm good, very good actually. It's summertime in Sweden and life is great pretty much all around at the moment.

Riku: Fine personally.

Mikko: Quite good. I've been practicing dad life for over a year now. Used to the fact that there is no proper sleep anymore. Guitarist's (Atte) situation is quite similar.

So, what is the reason No Exceptions exists in the first place?



Riku: Do you think there is no need for a Finnish Vegan Straight Edge band, eh? Personally I want to be in one with like-minded people and have an outlet to express myself. (I don't think anything. That's why I'm asking these questions, dude! -Ed.)

Joonas: The reason for the band to exist was the strong urge and need to create a straight edge hardcore band, where I could express myself and my thoughts through the music and lyrics. I've had many bands throughout the years, but this was the one I felt I actually had personally the most to say.

Mikko: Finnish hardcore has been suffering from a lack of proper straight/vegan edge hardcore that is not just chugga chugga mosh metal.

No Exceptions started as brainchild of Joonas. How easy was it to get the full band together? I remember that the band members hadn't been in the same bands together, and some of the band members didn't even know each other before No Exceptions.

Joonas: It was very easy and it seemed like the right people were found instantly. I guess I was at the right

place at the right time. I didn't know anyone that well before starting the band which was the first time I ever was in this situation, as all of my bands have always been formed with people I knew personally and were already my friends before. This time it was more about getting the right people no matter how well I knew them previously, as obviously there was a strict criteria on who was accepted and who was not. The people who joined the band certainly knew they were the right fit and the exact individuals needed.

Mikko: Atte and me have actually played together but that project is shelved at the moment and never played shows nor did proper recording. I personally like to get a fresh approach to making music and get to know good people I share interests and values with, and starting bands with new people is a good excuse for that kind of thing.

I got the impression that idea was to form a straight edge band. As in straight edge comes first, the ideological basis for to build upon?

Joonas: Yes, the ideological base is at the core of this band. That obviously means the straight edge is first and foremost the most important part of the band. I also wanted to especially form a vegan sXe band. The band was from the start very strict on what is being accepted and what is not. No Exceptions.

Riku: What Joonas Said 100%

Mikko: Nothing to add here.

What were the musical guidelines No Exceptions started with? If I recall correctly, the aim was to create something leaning towards youth crew stuff, but I guess that you can't exactly hide from your metal past. I mean that you can still hear the youth crew influence in there, but if one claims that No Exceptions sounds like Youth of Today or Side by Side we're on the wrong track.

Joonas: To some extent I tried to actually do songs more in the vein of Youth Crew stuff and especially Judge was a big influence in songwriting for me. But I guess you can't ever really escape the past? I've been playing and composing metal for the past 20 years, so I'm pretty sure that influence is coming through whether I want it or not. Songwriting is anyway more of a mystery to me anyways as I might have some ideas of bands and sounds I'd like my own songs to sound like but they usually end up being something else, which I personally think is a good thing.

Riku: I actually like how our sound formed, and that it does not sound like a carbon copy youth crew or vegan straight edge band. And actually this band sounds like what you could expect with this line up: hostile, raw, mean and stupid. And even though you can hear some unorthodox influences, it sounds like hardcore 100%.

Mikko: We are too old to be youth crew anyway, maybe too grim also? I like the way there is some hints of black metal influence but without the songs sounding like blackened whatever shit.

The music of No Exceptions is nasty, to say the least. It takes a whole different approach than most of the straight edge bands there has been in Finland, if there ever was one certain approach to it. Sairaat Mielet and Raivoraitius come to mind when I think of spiritually similar bands: those people were

naturally in the center of punk, but not exactly those sportswear-clad people. One could argue they were even outsiders. Was it a deliberate move to position yourselves to this end of the spectrum?

Joonas: I don't think it was deliberate at all. It just happened to sounds and became how it did in the end. But I think it's interesting that you mention the outsider aspect as I feel I'm personally certainly some kind of "outsider" in relation to punk and hardcore as I definitely do not have the most common background when it comes to these things, as most of my musical history consists of black metal releases.

Riku: Joonas still knows his hardcore and has also played that. And the rest of us have our strongest roots in hardcore and punk, but also in other forms of extreme music. Like the aforementioned black metal to some degree. And about being an outsider: I think that many, if not most of the people in hardcore, are familiar with the feeling of "not belonging". And straight edge is a counterculture movement also.

Mikko: I would love to play a Sairaats Mielet cover.

Other thing I sensed from the demo tracks I heard was the strong touch of metal, that I already referred to a couple of questions ago, and more extreme sides of it. The people of the band have some background in metal, if not playing in bands, then at least you have always had metal records on constant rotation. What do you think of this metal influence, especially from the straight edge HARDCORE point of view?

Joonas: I like hardcore punk and I like HARDCORE. And obviously I also like black metal, death metal, grindcore etc. But in this band there's not really that big of an influence from the more HARDCORE -movement (if you can call it so), instead maybe more into the youth crew direction, but as already went through in the previous questions that is probably not that obvious in the end result. The metal influence is there more as an "accident" than a conscious choice.

Riku: I personally think that there has always been cross pollution between hardcore and metal. Some bands sound more hardcore than others. And I clearly hear other straight edge and other old school hardcore influences (and even some Oi!) apart from youth crew hardcore and other aforementioned music sub-genres, in our music.

Mikko: Continuing from earlier. Maybe the more sensible way to combine bm to hc is to actually listen and make bm yourself. But this is a hardcore record through and through, not a fusion of genres like let's say GEHENNA (which is still hardcore in my book but you get the point).

I guess I have to ask this; what inspires you, when you write lyrics?

Joonas: My personal life events, the problematic attitudes (especially Finnish) people have in relation to alcohol & drugs, the overall state of the current world and its events and lastly the love I have for animals and the hatred I have for (certain aspects of) mankind.

Riku: Only one song from our first recording has lyrics made by me (in which I borrowed one line from my straight edge brother Valtteri haha) and it has an animal

rights theme, which is pretty self-explanatory. It also has some provocative and tongue in cheek lines, but that's hardcore. And one of our new songs is about things that anger us. My lyrics have always been influenced by my values, personal life and spiritual views, and also hardcore itself. And writing has been an outlet to express myself, or a vent for my anger.

I took a glance at your lyrics and there's barely any promotion of straight edge lifestyle and it's good sides. Instead, they seem to be mostly about personal accounts of abuse, getting victimized but eventually rising above and casting judgments. Alcohol and drug-use are not directly referred to, but given the fact No Exceptions is a straight edge band, I reckon the substance abuse and it's side effects are always present...?

Joonas: Yes, you are correct. I was raised by two alcoholic parents and having gone through a long history of alcoholism, drug abuse and addiction myself, I think I have a lot to say from these topics from the darker side of life as I know first hand how destructive alcohol and drugs can be. I haven't written any lyrics for any bands in many many years, but for this one the writer's block finally disappeared and writing lyrics was actually really easy. I guess that was just something I had to get out of my system, but I am





eagerly waiting to write more lyrics and this is a topic I definitely have a lot more things to say and write about.

Riku: Those are themes I also can relate to, and I really liked Joonas's lyrics, and the direct approach in them.

Mikko: It's nice to be in a band where you don't have to make the lyrics and the lyrics are better you could come up with anyway.

Other recurring themes are slavery and oppression, both mental and tangible forms of it. Can you elaborate on these topics?

Joonas: Slavery and freedom are definitely topics that all are there in the lyrics. I feel like a lot of the drug and alcohol abuse is coming from the side of trying to free yourself from something; social anxiety, stress of life, uncomfortable and/or negative feelings or emotions. But obviously if not right now, then in the long term it ends up being the chains and a cage instead as you are becoming a slave for the substance. And this is how the roles are being reversed, you run away from something, and get a false sense of freedom through drugs or alcohol and in the end end up being addicted and slaved by these things and none of the original problems have been resolved, instead they usually have just been piling up and become worse. Oppression is also present there in a form that we should all try to destroy the socio-economic structures that stand for oppression and inequality.

Riku: My lyrics also mention slavery, but in a form of animal agriculture and abuse etc.

The point of view and the angry tone in the lyrics are another factor that remind me of Sairaatt Mielet. After all, they had just "Juopot riviin ja PAM!" kind of approach. What do you think?

Joonas: There's definitely a lot of hatred in the lyrics as I've had to go through some really bad stuff in my life and to process those things, hatred is a natural response. I don't really know if that's the right way to tackle these issues as a larger scale problem related to how our society, culture and attitudes have been built and formed, but I'm not here to solve those problems with this band. I think it's justified to be angry and disappointed and let people know that their behavior is not acceptable. And to fight strongly against the culture where alcohol & drug-abuse is being encouraged, accepted or even glorified. Obviously on a larger scale the people should be helped to deal with their addiction through offering enough professional help with mental health issues and addictions. But first they need to wake the fuck up and seek the help themselves.

This is a theme I discussed with one of your band members earlier, but we came to a conclusion: a majority of the problems we face as either individuals or as a part of society stem from our inability to deal with our emotions properly. What do you think?

Joonas: I agree, at least on an individual level. Facing your emotions, feelings and possible traumas is extremely difficult. I ran away from my own past for a long long time by using alcohol and drugs to numb the pain, so I know first hand how difficult it is to come face to face with your emotions. Especially after I became sober, it was really really difficult to face all the emotions in their raw form as I've been running away from them for almost 20 years by abusing alcohol and drugs and using them as "self-medication". Luckily I was able to do that and currently I am alive, sober and happy.

Riku: Yes. When you are able to confront and accept

some of your problems, feelings or things in yourself, and not hiding, running or pushing them away, the healing has the possibility to begin. I could explain this theme much better in Finnish. Pick your fights and change what you can, and accept what you can't change. And I think this goes on much deeper, than on an individual level, and our whole cultural and political atmosphere and system has very delusional patterns, and attitudes. And that causes suffering to the world.

Mikko: It is hard enough trying not to run away from your problems sober, but near impossible with substance abuse. One can't always choose their circumstances, but most can still choose to try and make a difference. Sometimes you just have to do hard things to get forward. Surrounding yourself with encouraging people who don't always let you go the easy way helps a lot.

While many straight edge lyrics have had a positive undertone or at least they try to have one, your lyrics have a negative vibe in them; cynicism, straight out hatred and general "being fed up" aspect, but without any "angry old men yelling at clouds" attitude in them to soften the way the message is delivered. Are the days of positivity over?

Joonas: I guess that's because deep down I'm not really a positive person? There are a lot of times when I feel like just saying "fuck humanity" (or "fuck the universe" for that matter) and sometimes I have to fight against misanthropic thoughts. I want to see the good in people but it's really really hard, except on an individual level. I think there's room for both positivity and negativity, the way I've chosen to express myself this way, but I think we also need positive aspects to our life, and I'll leave that for other bands to handle.

Riku: To me being confrontational and angry is a big part of some of the best hardcore and straight edge hardcore. It can be an outlet for many kinds of emotions and feelings. And maybe one way to explore and process some darker corners of your mind. At least for me. And I'm not talking about right wing shit.

Mikko: I think there is a place for positivity, and I would love to see some new pma youth crew attitude hardcore bands in the future in Finland also. But I guess the Finnish blood pulls us all to grimmer aesthetics...

It's always been argued that aggressive music can be seen as having some therapeutical effect in them. How important it is to have a channel like this to vent your frustration out?

Joonas: It is very important. I'd say it's a matter of life and death for me personally, as I probably wouldn't be alive if I didn't have a way to express myself through music when I was younger. Later in life I've luckily also gone through actual therapy for multiple years, but creating music is still an important aspect in my life.

Riku: Yeah I agree. And tried to explain some of that in a previous question.

Mikko: Doing this kind of music is important to me and as a creative person it fills a need. I would also point out that for many music and engaging in music scenes is escapism and that is something quite opposite of what actual therapy is about, like what we talked above about not facing your problems. So you shouldn't replace taking care of yourself with music but It can definitely complement.

In the context of hardcore having serious lyrics and staunch approach towards the subjects they address has sometimes led some people to subdue the messengers being subjects of ridicule, regardless the

original approach being intentional or not. Are you afraid of the misinterpretations that might surface?

Joonas: Nope. Overall I don't really care much what people think of me as a person or my bands. I've had both hatred and praise directed to artistic endeavors in the past so I've already seen it all.

The Finnish life embraces the use of alcohol, and the Finnish music scenes are no exception on that. Well, if you take a look at articles written about Finnish metal exports there's usually booze involved in a way or another, and you can't browse a single issue of metal magazines or zines without references to excessive use of alcohol, even if it's light-hearted... and we don't even need to get into the punk subculture in detail. How's it like to operate in this realm where alcohol is almost always "needed" when you go out and go see the bands?

Joonas: It's fucked up. Finnish people have a really serious and deeply rooted problem in our culture on how alcohol and alcoholism has been normalized and what kind of attitudes people have towards alcohol and its usage in our everyday lives. It's also a really touchy subject, which is understandable because almost everyone has experience related to alcoholism in their lives and it touches so many people on a really personal and deep level. Talking about these problems causes people to react really aggressively and strongly, as it's a social rule that getting wasted is just the norm, and if you criticize that you're rocking the boat and bringing forward unwanted emotions that people want to hide and not to deal with. I mean, I understand, I've been on the other side where if people would criticize my behavior while drunk, or how often I would use alcohol I would get offended. The behavior that is tolerated, justified and accepted in Finland just because someone happened to be intoxicated is completely absurd, and a lot of suffering has come out of that. You know all these people who are "good guys when they are sober", right? To be honest, one of the reasons I've wanted to get the fuck out of Finland is the culture related to alcohol and I'm really happy living abroad.

Riku: Yeah Finnish drinking culture is very twisted, and reactions to a conversation about how people can't show up intoxicated to an under-age show, where the policy is no alcohol, was a prime example of that.

Mikko: I used to get quite fucked before seeing shows when I was younger. Especially when I was going alone which was usually the case as I hardly knew anyone from the scene. I'm sure I was no exception. I'm also sure it would have helped a lot more for my social anxiety if I had like gone to gym before show instead. How 'bout that for culture?

How do you think being straight edge is in Finland and in the Finnish hardcore scene? Usually it seems that "straight edge" is often seen as something you don't take serious and there's even wrong perceptions of it. Sometimes people even rush to state that they are NOT straight edge even if they abstain from alcohol and substance use.

Joonas: To be honest, I haven't really thought about this at all. I guess from the start it was so obvious that a lot of people would dislike a straight edge band because we are criticizing the "norm" in the punk scene that the reception and interest have actually been way more positive than I thought it would be?

Riku: Well there still are many straight edge people here, and many are prominent figures in our hardcore scene. And I don't give a fuck if non-straight edge people think ill about straight edge. I'm not here for marketing, and especially not for them. Straight Edge is not for everybody and not the same thing as being sober. And if I want to advocate a sober lifestyle, I also have other routes for that, outside of straight edge and hardcore.

Mikko: Straight edge has been in sidelines for while in Finnish hardcore. It is time for a change.

All of you are a bit older than youth crew bands were in their heyday, with Atte being the youngest member in the band and even he's closer to his 30s than his 20s. Straight edge still seems to be associated with young angry men with sometimes no experience with years of alcohol consumption, for an example, including suspicions that the individuals involved have yet to taste the godly nectar or just don't know how to party. You are quite the opposite of that clean look that is often associated with new straight edge bands...can you turn that into a strength?



Joonas: I guess at least I can say I know what I'm talking about related to alcohol and drugs, hah! I love not being young anymore, everything is so much better in my life than before. Also, I think as I have so much experience in making music throughout the years, everything is quite easy and smooth and there's not really any kind of uncertainty about anything we're doing or saying. And not really caring what people think because if they hate us, that's fine by me, if they like us, that's fine too.

Riku: Yeah we are no poster boys and we have a history with intoxication also. Some of us have more "edge years" under our belt than others, but for us straight edge or being vegan is not a phase or a trend. It's what we are and for us dedication is more than a word. And there is a long history of rough looking straight edge bands. And I do

own Champion hoodies and two pairs of vegan Jordans (AJKOs) haha. "Middle-crew, truer than you".

Mikko: I don't think hardcore and straight edge have to be just youth cultures forever. Of course it's better if young people find it and it's not just geriatrics that nostalgize their heyday. And I really do think that a person who has experienced stuff in their youth are more likely to keep their edge than some underage kids who haven't been truly tested yet. Hails to the ones who never bothered with alcohol in Finland.

Since Joonas lives in Sweden, have you got a hold of similar issues in Sweden? How does the straight edge hardcore fare over there? Are there hardcore shows for all ages?

Joonas: The hardcore and straight edge scene is thriving in Sweden. There's a lot of shows which are for all ages and for example Stockholm Straight Edge and Acting Out Stockholm are active in arranging shows quite often. Even in shows where own alcoholic drinks are allowed, there's not really any super drunk people around (except for the Finnish tourists of course) and people know how to



behave. There's a lot of young and really energetic people participating in the shows and things are pretty crazy here even in shows arranged during the week with not a big of an audience and get really crazy in the weekends hardcore shows. It's really really good here. (As I said in one of the previous issues of Spectrum of Circles, I recommend to check out Quarantined zine. Those zines can give some insight on the Swedish scene, too. -Ed.)

As I'm writing these questions you haven't played a single show yet (This has changed when I'm making the layout for this interview. -Ed.). With one of the band members living in Sweden and the other members being committed to other things in life, do you see yourselves playing shows on a regular basis in the foreseeable future?

Joonas: I'd say if we can play a small bunch of selected shows per year that's enough. There are multiple shows already planned for -24. I don't think there's any pressure for us to do anything beyond that, and also I'm not too thrilled about traveling back to Finland all the time. But we will see.

By the time this interview is published, your first 7" is either already released or at least pretty close to it. Can you tell something about the process of making that record? How were the songs selected into it?

Joonas: So, actually we are not doing 7" but a tape which will be released by Mäntsälä Hardcore in some time during the future. You might be confusing this with one other 7" by another hardcore band which I will be doing with my own new label... (This is within the realm of possibilities. The confusion, that is. -Ed.) The songwriting process was very straightforward and I just wrote the songs we used for the first release, we rehearsed and arranged those as a band, and that was it, there was no spare material whatsoever.

Riku: Yeah. Our upcoming tape EP is called "The Line is Drawn" and it consists of 6 songs including intro. The wizard called Samuli (from Gray State fame etc.) recorded and produced it. And we are very pleased with the result. Everything with this band has gone smoothly and easily, and everybody have been on the same page, and understood what this is about, and what to do. Mäntsälä Hardcore will release the tape, which we are also happy about, because the label has released many of the best current bands from Finland and Nakki knows what he is doing.

You decide to release the 7" by yourselves. How did you decide to do that? Did you even seek out publishers?

Joonas: See above.

Do you have anything else – pardon the expression - brewing in the pot as we speak? Any new songs in the making, perhaps?

Joonas: We have a few new songs already ready for the next release and are going to keep on doing more in future. We also have a bunch of live shows planned for the autumn in Finland. I definitely want to keep on doing more material with this band so more releases are coming later. Maybe a 7" next?

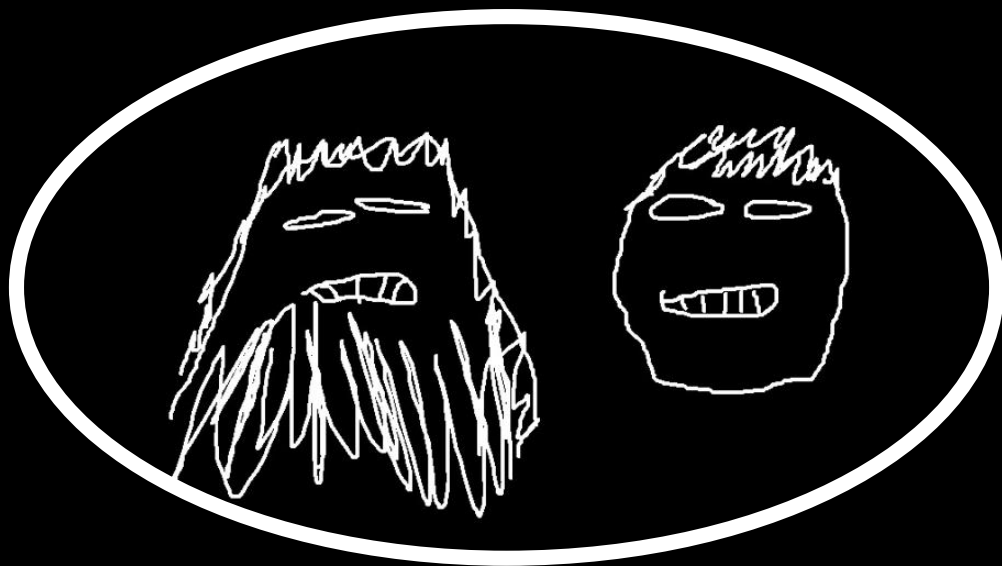
I don't think I don't have anything else at this point. Do you wish to express something that wasn't touched upon yet? Thanks for the interview!

Joonas: Thank you a lot for the interview. I really enjoyed answering these questions as they were really good and well thought out.

Riku: Tavastian Vegan Straight Edge - New Wave of Häme Puupää Hardcore. Fuck all right wing idiots. Thanks for the interview.

Mikko: Lift weights and always keep the faith. And listen to Hardball.

SAVAGE GOSPEL



Adult oriented noise? Noise to grate your cheese to? Can that even exist? Well, these gentlemen have a long history with noise and they're grown-ups, although Savage Gospel isn't an entity with similar history. However, friendship can produce beautiful things, and Savage Gospel certainly is one such outcome that two people in love with noise could make together. To celebrate noise just for the sake of noise.

They don't intentionally hide in the shades of mystery, evasion or anonymity, but they still claimed that there's not much photos of them. So, I improvised and made my own interpretation of them. D.I.Y.!!!

July/August 2024.



Hello! How life treats you?

Ilkka: Sitting at my computer, listening to Tahmela Six - Mount lp. Outside the world is slowly ending.

Janne: Back at work after a vacation, but always excited about an abundance of things!

One reason I include noise artists in this zine is my purely altruistic intention to ruin our youth by featuring noise in the same issues with their favorite artists that operate within the rock music spectrum – death metal, hardcore, grindcore and such. How did you first get introduced to noise in the first place? Was it thru more "conventional" extreme music such as extreme metal, or something completely else?

Ilkka: My first contact with industrial/experimental music was reading about Einsturzende Neubauten in Soundi magazine ca.1984. I found Japanese noise through noisecore (The Geroigerigege) and the Boredoms in mid-to-late nineties.

Janne: I once read somewhere that you cannot recommend noise to anyone, they'll find it themselves if they want to. My path was more through "creative cross-referencing" and curiosity. I got into stuff like punk / Bad Vugum / Sonic Youth at an early age and went from there. There's only a short step from The Golden Greats of IKBAL to Stockhausen. Sonic Youth was of course a great way to find out about noise in the pre-internet era! I started making my first experiments in feedback & guitar noise at around 17 years old... The article on Japanese noise in Mutiny! zine in 1996 was a big revelation.

What are the origins of Savage Gospel project? How did it see the light of day?

Ilkka: I can't really remember. One day I decided that I want to start a "no bullshit harsh noise duo" a'la The Incapacitants, Heinz Hopf etc. I sent Janne a message cause I knew he was into the same style of harsh noise as me, and he was into the idea. I think it went like that?

Janne: Yes, it was more or less like that. Ilkka wanted to make great harsh noise and I love harsh noise so let's go!

Ilkka operates under Haare moniker and Janne is known for entirely different music. What Savage Gospel gives you that you don't get from any other of the bands and projects you are involved with?

Ilkka: The ecstasy that comes with playing the "true sound of love" (trademark/copyright Emil Beaulieu). It's a sweet ride mama.

Janne: Like I mentioned earlier, I dabbled in noise already as a teenager. I was fascinated by the opportunity to pick up where I left off, but do it properly this time! It truly is an ecstatic experience.

You both listen to and even make "normal music", if that's the correct choice of words. Do you allow yourselves to draw influences from other types of

music or let it affect your approach to noise, or do you intentionally try to keep these worlds separate?

Ilkka: For Haare I draw influences here & there but Savage Gospel is old school harsh noise, pure & simple. It's not supposed to "progress" anywhere. It is what it is.

Janne: I agree with Ilkka. No conceptual madness here. Like John Cage once said: I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry.

What kind of a equipment and gear you use? Have you found the right "rig", or do you chance parts of it? Do you need to alter it?

Ilkka: I've pretty much found my sweet spot combo for Savage Gospel. Of course I can change things if I feel like it, but for now, I don't feel the need. Dod Grunge, contact mics, sometimes a delay pedal and or octave pedal. I like to keep my chain minimal.

Janne: Anything to get that sweet crunch and beautiful feedback. No rigs.


I guess you build your own equipment. Do you see it's important to create your own instruments as a path to tap into the source of creative process?

Ilkka: Calling it "building" is a bit of a stretch. I have a metal frame of an electrical wall unit with couple of springs & a piece of chain added. All FX I use are basic, storebought stuff. The contact mics we use are P.Dassum high quality noise gear.

Janne: Most of the pedals I have are custom built for me. The source of sound informs the noise of course, but chance also plays a role.

I have seen you perform just once. On that occasion





Janne used a (empty) can of paint transformed into a contact microphone. Is there a preferred brand of paint? I mean, I could think that a can of Tikkurila Empire could produce a whole different sound than, for an instance, a can of Teknos Panu+.

Ilkka: It's just a can with some nuts & bolts inside, and a contact mic attached...

Janne: Yeah, like I said, chance plays a role and I found that paint can at my work space (carpenters also work there) – took a while for the smell to evaporate, stunk up my living room when I brought it home.

One thing I noticed was the dynamics between you two. Is that a reason why you even perform as Savage Gospel?

Ilkka: Interplay is essential with a duo, listening, and reacting to what the other person is doing. It's also a lot more fun than playing solo.

Janne: Yes, it's a beautiful thing to interact. Also I love the security it brings to play with an older grizzly bear like Ilkka.

Do you approach live performances and your recordings in a similar fashion, or are the considerable differences between the two?

Ilkka: It's pretty much the same. Recordings sometimes require some post-production and/or overdubs though.

Janne: The approach is the same, recording allows more experiments and the possibility to cut out all the embarrassing bits.


Out of the recorded works you have done so far, what is your favorite? And why? Can you pick your favorite out of your own children?

Ilkka: The debut cd on WCN is my favourite. There was some kind of "necessity" for me to get it out of my system, and it turned out exactly as planned. Also I think the split with Incapacitants was a succesful recording, and it was a great honor to share a cd with our old favourites.

Janne: I'm pretty pleased with all of it. We haven't "flooded the market". I was truly psyched about the split with Incapacitants!

Harsh noise artists often utilize extreme imagery to supplement their approach to noise, or even use that as a starting point. How much you give emphasize to visual aspect of Savage Gospel? Is it supplementary to your original message or are you building up contrasts between the two?

Ilkka: It's more about contrast I'd say. Classic Japanese noise like Hijokaidan, Incapacitants or CCCC did not use very extreme imagery, their ideas about artwork often came from classic prog rock (compare f.e. the artwork of Hijokaidan "Modern" and Peter Hammill's "Nadir's big chance"). The "nazi fist up a corpse's ass"-style artwork is not for us, also I want there to be some IDEA behind the artwork too. The grayscale xerox texture collage thing is getting a bit old too.



Janne: I agree with Ilkka. For me, noise is the all encompassing ecstasy and release of sound, no need for tough boy mentality. Empathy is what we need in this world.

Could you see your visual image as... safe? There's usually images that one can hardly find offensive or confrontational, unless you can see that the old "never judge a book by it's cover" phrase is applicable in your case. There's this "postcard noise" aspect on the cover of your eponymous album and "Horrors of Nature" has this National Geographic vibe in it.

Ilkka: I think I accidentally answered this in the earlier question. Yes, our artwork is "safe for work", the sound though...depends where you work. One of my favourite noise album covers is Hijokaidan's "Windom", which definitely has that "don't judge a book by it's cover"-thing going, as it looks like a Windham Hill-type easy listening record. I love that. "Horrors of Nature" design is a homage to Incapacitants' Alchemy Records cds.

Janne: I love the Incapacitants' "As Loud As Possible" cover, two gentlemen having lunch.

Music and noise are highly subjective matters. How much do you emphasize on listener's own interpretation instead of an intended way to approach the noise you create? Is there a certain interpretation in mind when you construct Savage Gospel's creations?

Ilkka: It's supposed to be listened to, and preferably at a decent volume. That is how I approach harsh noise anyway. If someone wants to interpret or find some "message", they are naturally free to do so. I simply want to submit to the noise, let it wash over me. It's a feeling similar to diving under water.

Janne: Like mentioned earlier, harsh noise is probably a style of sound that cannot be recommended to anyone so I also think that the experience of immersing oneself to noise is also personal. I myself love it and find it relaxing.

What kind of interpretations people have brought up regarding Savage Gospel's work, given people have shared them?

Ilkka: None. It's the usual "fucking great" (face to face) and "kinda boring" (online).

Janne: My son said he'd rather rub his ears with a cheese grater than listen to our record.

As of early summer of 2024 the new Savage Gospel creation "Nothing Makes Sense" saw daylight in digital format. How would you describe the album?

Is there a certain theme you explored or some other specific collective thought behind it?

Ilkka: The difference is that it was recorded as a trio with Ville Härkönen. It was supposed to be just a jam session but we were pleased with the results & Dunkelheit wanted to release it so we thought why not. Cd version should be out when you read this.

Janne: Yeah, it was interesting to "expand" our sound with Ville's vision for this recording.

There's another new Savage Gospel album being released in summer. How about that one?

Ilkka: That took a while. I just paid the import taxes for the LPs today, so it should be available from us in a couple of days. It's released by Fusty/USA, front cover art by the legendary Juho Juntunen.

Janne: This is now available and it is amazing. Great to have our sound on vinyl as well!

Fun fact: The cover art of the first Savage Gospel album features a photo of a tall building located in Pori city center. The same building was on the cover of the second issue of Ajatuksen Valo, which featured an interview with Hippycrack; a noise artist and individual who introduced me to harsh noise along with Pentti D. Hippycrack, in turn, has collaborated on the same compilation with Savage Gospel. World is a small place, huh? While this is my deeply personal experience, it still somehow speaks volumes of Finnish noise scene. What do you think?

Ilkka: The building on the cd cover is not in Pori, but somewhere in the former Soviet Union. There is an easter egg though; one of the photos is from a rather famous conceptual art piece, while the rest are from Neuvostoliitto magazine (Soviet Union Pictorial magazine.) But yeah, the scene is small. (And that photograph speaks volumes about the city of Pori. -Ed.)

What do you think of the contemporary noise scene? It certainly has changed within a decade. A lot more people are active, and sometimes it seems it's not just about freaks and outcasts making it. Could one argue, that noise has become more "accepted", while it's still... well, noise, and it's still far from being accessible, both musically and sometimes aesthetically. Also, the scene doesn't always seem particularly inviting, or at least that was my perception when I first got in contact with it.

Ilkka: I think it's cool that there are a lot of new, young artists & f.e. Satatuhatta label has been a real positive boost for the Finnish scene. Worldwide, I think it's bigger than ever. I know there are people who WANT to keep noise "uninviting" and sort of "gatekeep" it but I think that's stupid. Noise doesn't have to be "inclusive", but if someone wants to take part in it, they should of course be free to do so. By nature, noise will stay more or less elitist anyway, I think there's no fear of it going "mainstream". But of course if you want to get into the scene properly, you should give something back to the scene. You know, DO SOMETHING in the scene/for the scene. Also, don't expect the whole scene to change to your liking. There are things in noise I don't like so I simply don't take part in those. Pick what suits you. It's very simple really.

Janne: Again, I agree with Ilkka. I think noise as a scene should be inclusive and encouraging, the sound will definitely alienate enough people. All in all I think most people might benefit from listening to more noise, free jazz, improvisation and other kinds of exciting stuff. It opens up a world of possibilities!

Since noise is relatively elitistic art form and not something you just immediately stumble upon after

being exposed to Misfits during your first class of "real music" studies. Do you think that noise can have any accessibility to a point there's "easy listening noise" or some "gateway artists" into the deeper levels of noise? Does that contradict the very essence noise is about, in case there is something that you can say it "is about"?

Ilkka: People seem to find noise through very different routes; some via extreme metal or grindcore, some via noisy hip-hop or techno etc. I don't think there is any "easy listening noise" but I think it's safe to say that if you like Merzbow the first time you hear, say f.e. "Venereology", noise probably is for you.

Janne: I think Wolf Eyes were the closest thing to "fashionable" noise back in the days, they sold a lot of records and toured the world. In the future, there might be new enthusiasts coming in through the world of electronic music. Lots of exciting sounds happening in that realm!

Use of AI has been a hot topic within rock music and especially in extreme metal, and that's not limited to just album covers. I'm not that deep in the noise scene to tell if this phenomenon has been addressed in the noise scene, but what are your thoughts on the

subject? At least I tend to think of noise that it's been deliberately constructed by a human being with a specific intention in mind. Not only that, but it also matters HOW it is made.

Ilkka: I've seen some artists use AI generated artwork, but I don't think I've heard any AI generated noise. I think AI could be a useful tool but I kind of hate the whole idea of AI. In all art, the person doing it puts a bit of their soul into it. AI can never replace that.

Janne: AI seems to be a hot topic at the moment, but like Ilkka, I'm not interested in it at all. I suppose most AI imagery will turn out looking like the effects in the movie "Willow" soon enough. I don't see any benefits (or fun for that matter) in creating noise with AI. The beauty of it is exactly in the human element; i.e. errors.



The new album, "Blunt Reset" features artwork by one and only Juho Juntunen. A person known as a driving force behind Soundi magazine back in the day, illustrator and a "rock person". As an illustrator, he is known for his distinctive style, ancient Juice Leskinen album covers along with other classic Finnish rock album covers, bikers of Tuska MC and his unparalleled love towards the city of Forssa. How did the idea to use Juho Juntunen's services come up? Who was behind the idea? I reckon it was specifically made for this album?

Ilkka: It was my idea. I think Juntunen is a legend and I thought it'd be nice to be part of the continuum of great record covers he's done. When I was a kid I really loved his illustrations in Soundi, especially the pig-snouted punk rockers, f.e. the cover of the "punk in Finland"-issue (if memory serves, Soundi 4/1983). I had that cover on my wall when I was in elementary school. As Janne has loads of connections to culture/music types, I asked if he knows Juntunen and of course he did. And hey, Juntunen is the guy who came up with the idea to demand all bands "play Paranoid" at their shows!

Did he work along specific guidelines or was he free to do anything he thought would be best, based on the album or just mental images of it?

Ilkka: I made a rough sketch and he took it from there.

We all can see what is on the cover. But how would YOU describe it and what's happening in it. Is the person being "bluntly reset"?

Ilkka: Anyone who's been into punk/metal/noise for a while, has seen at least some version of a picture like that, ears bleeding/head exploding because of NOISE, usually drawn in that "annoying high school big nose"-style (that term copyright comic book artist Ville Pirinen). That's what we wanted, but done a bit more professionally. You can say it's a blunt reset.

Is Juntunen a noisefreak? Does the cover art depict himself or a person like him being first subjected to harsh noise?

Ilkka: I think he's more into Motörhead. He hasn't heard the album yet, but he's getting a copy from us.

Does the cover art serve a specific purpose other than serve as an album cover art? To arouse some kind of a reaction from the noise scene, perhaps? Or is it a diabolical plan to set a noise-filled trap for those unsuspecting individuals who buy albums because of their cover art? (Yeah, in a dreamworld where you can actually buy this album from your local Record Shop X, -Ed.)

Ilkka: Like the late, great Koji Tano once said "it is no meaning." It's just cover art, and it only occurred to me later that it's VERY different from most noise covers. If some noise puritan gets somehow offended by it, that'd be awesome.

After all and bluntly put, the purpose for album cover art is to sell a product. Yes, it is like that in every possible music scene and it has always been like that, regardless of every possible ways to vindicate it and claim it's not like that, for an example by appealing to artistic or creative grounds. For an example, there's a reason why black metal albums often rely on black and white aesthetics; the purpose is to signal an idea of the content and promote it to individuals who might get something out of it. In other words: to sell the product. However, album art such as that usually sells some other kind of content than harsh noise for noise freaks. What do you think?

Ilkka: Yes, you're probably right. We have another curveball up our sleeves for an upcoming release but I won't say more of it, as it's way too early.

How about the content, then? Is it representation of the most hideous and abrasive face of Savage Gospel, or perhaps a turn towards friendlier "reader of Soundi magazine noise"? (Juntunen hasn't been working with Soundi for over a decade, but you get the idea. -Ed.)

Ilkka: Nope, the album is definitely not for readers of Soundi. But on the other hand, the LP is not our most aggressive material either. It's more of an abrasive, peel your face slowly-type endurance test.

You implied that shirts with this design are in the consideration. Just a thought, but I think it would be neat to spot those in public and in such unexpected situations, like happened with Sick Urge "Mannerheim on a horseback" shirts. How cool is that?

Ilkka: It would be nice. I haven't heard back from the person who was going to be making the shirts though, but we might just get some done ourselves. It will come with a back print; possibly "Harsh Noise Hurricanes". Or "Harsh Noise Virgins". Or something. We'll see.

Last, but not least: Are you happy with the album and it's artwork?

Ilkka: Yes, especially happy with the artwork! Also, it's great soundwise, and it was a cool surprise that they came on different coloured vinyl, we didn't know that and were expecting black vinyl. (I'm a black vinyl guy myself, but I know "the kids" these days are into the coloured ones.)

I think we're done. Thanks for the chat and all the best!

Ilkka: Thanks for the interview! Peace!

Tawastian archives



Most of this article is based mostly on my vague personal memories. I tried to be careful, but corrections are definitely welcome, in case there are errors.

If you don't remember Inferior, fear not; this Hämeenlinna-based thrash metal band was active only during a short period of time in the mid-2000s. Formed in circa 2004, the band consisted of five teenager metalheads; my peers. In fact, prior to formation of the band I had been hanging out with one of these dudes, as he was my classmate, and I knew some of some of the other dudes, too.

I wasn't really close to the band, though, and I didn't got hold of any copies of their demos (which could seem strange, if you know me personally and are aware of my record hoarding abilities), which they produced a couple. Sadly, the band was active during a period of time when some of the information is forever lost to the digital abyss of oblivion... but I do remember they put some stuff into their Mikseri.net page, which was THE platform for upcoming bands and other musical projects to gain some exposure. Kind of a Bandcamp of it's day. Other than those Mikseri.net demo tracks, not much information about Inferior's recordings are preserved to this day.

In the beginning Inferior was about old school Metallica worship, and some other "household names for a Finnish metalhead" were certainly on their menu. What they offered to us was their own songs, in pure thrash metal vein; nothing too complex, nothing too fancy, but something to break your neck to. I recall their live sets having some Metallica songs in there, possibly "Seek and Destroy", if my memory serves me right. Mind you, we were teenagers, and of course teenage metal bands do have covers such as that.

Inferior was also one of the first bands I saw live. As an underage metalhead there were certainly not too many gigs you could possibly attend to, so you had to pick every possible piece you could, and most of those gigs were organized at local youth centers. It was during this time I saw local soon-to-be-legends Roctum for the first time as well (and that's the story for another time) or at least one band featuring a guitarist with pitch-black hair and cargo pants playing "Refuse/Resist" covers. You know, those bands were everywhere back then.

While their earlier work(s) were more into rudimentary basics of thrash metal, their 2006 promo saw them venturing on to more modern direction and the swamps of death/thrash metal. I recall Metallica covers having been switched to Pantera ones (and I do remind you that it's just my memory which could be playing tricks here!), so that might give you an idea of the musical progression they were going thru. Also this promo was way more professional in terms of sound and execution, and visual imagery consisting of rays of the sun really speaks volymes of the modern metal of that day. Still don't remember? Mind you, Finland was literally crawling with the bands like that. Lucky for us, those two tracks of the promo are still online at Mikseri.net (which is still operating, as strange as it sounds!). Last time I saw Inferior playing live was at a local rock bar, which we were finally able to enter.

It was in 2007 or 2008 when the band ceased to exist and the former band members went on to pursue other interests in life. I'm not going to tell any lies and claim Inferior were better than they actually were, or notable or even interesting than every other metal band of their day. But were Inferior good? Hell yeah, at least I honestly thought so. Were they legendary? Hardly. Did they make an impact? Certainly not in a big picture, but for some individuals like me; YES.

It wasn't just me and a few other bastards who were excited about them. We are talking about small venues here, but I recall those places being crowded when Inferior was in the house. For many of us, Inferior was the first local band that was actually going somewhere, at least out of their rehearsal room. With that in mind, you could refer to them as local heroes for the young mid-2000s metalhead generation of Hämeenlinna. You always need torchbearers, regardless of your age, experience in metal and your scene.

And there's a photo! Neat, right? Now, spot the editor from the front row.



The makers of...

